



The Goldfinch

Newsletter of the Howard County Bird Club
 A Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society
www.howardbirds.org



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CLUB MEETINGS - BY [JANE GEUDER](#)

Thursday, September 13, 2012 "*Far Out Alaska: Birding Beringia for a Month.*" by Jay Sheppard, retired U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service ornithologist. Jay's presentation will highlight remote birding places in the Bering Sea visited during a May/June 2010 trek to see new birds. Jay is a long-time member of the Howard County Bird Club.

Thursday, October 11, 2012 "HCBC's Spontaneous On-Line Butterfly Photo-Guide," by Richard H. Smith. Dick is Maryland's recognized butterfly expert and also a long-time member of the bird club. He will discuss the history and organization of the club's butterfly photo gallery and point out occurrence trends and the current status of several of our county species.

Meetings are at the Robinson Nature Center, 6692 Cedar Lane, Columbia MD 21044. Hospitality at 7:30 p.m. Meeting with program begins at 8:00 p.m. Nature Center doors unlocked at 7:15 p.m. and locked again at 8:15 p.m. There is no admission charge. For further information call Wes Earp, 410-531-3197.

PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

BY [WES EARP](#)

It's our 41st year, one full of great birding opportunities thanks to the many volunteer hours of our talented members. The dozens of field trips, this newsletter, the webpage, the monthly lectures, the potluck dinner, youth art contest and more are all the results of their combined work. So be sure to take advantage of these efforts and join in whenever you can.

This is the first full year of the new emailed *Goldfinch*. In a rare case of austerity resulting from technology, our effort to save trees has resulted in some monetary savings. So, we are passing the postage savings back to our email subscribers. Look for the revised membership application with this issue and select the "Email Only" option to take advantage of the savings. Let us know if you read the MOS *Yellowthroat* online as well.

Also new this year, we will be partnering with the folks at the College of Agriculture & Natural Resources (UMDCF) during their fall open house by providing bird walks for their guests. Everyone is welcome for the walks and the rest of the facility's activities. Be sure to note the details of this event on page two and plan on spending a fall Saturday at this wonderful birding resource.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

During this year's May Count, there were seven bird species with 500 or more individuals counted. Can you name all seven species? (Answer on [page 8](#).)

FALL FIELD TRIPS BY [BONNIE OTT](#) & [JOE HANFMAN](#)

Field trips are a great way to improve birding skills, explore new places and meet other birders. Arrive at the meeting site ready to leave at the designated time with appropriate footwear and gear. Carpooling is strongly encouraged. The leader may cancel due to inclement weather/hazardous driving conditions. Directions for trips not on ADC maps are on the Club's website. Questions? Contact the trip leader or Field Trip Coordinator Bonnie Ott at bonnieott@verizon.net. HCBC members receive priority on trips that are limited by number of participants. No pets.

BUTTERFLIES THROUGH BINOCULARS – [LAKE ELKHORN POWERLINE VEGETATION MANAGEMENT STUDY TRACT](#)

September 1, Saturday, 9:30 a.m. (2-3 hours)
Meet at Elkhorn Garden Plots, Oakland Mills Rd opposite Dasher Ct. Enjoy searching for late-summer butterflies, and receive expert instruction on their identification. Dick will add information about caterpillar host and adult nectar plants as we encounter various species. Easy walking among the garden plots and on paved paths near the right-of-way alongside open, flowery wet meadows and brushy hillsides. Bring close-focus binoculars to view nectaring behavior, but Dick will also use net and jars to provide brief close-up examinations. Cancelled if raining or overcast. No facilities. *Leader - Dick Smith 410-997-7439.*

[ROCKBURN BRANCH PARK](#)

September 8, Saturday, 8:00 a.m. (half day) *Meet in parking lot on the left just past the restored schoolhouse. The park gate is just beyond Rockburn Elementary School.* Moderate walking through the woods and fields of our largest county park looking for migrants. Paths may be muddy. *Facilities available. Leaders - Karen Darcy and Kevin Heffernan 410-418-8731 or KJHeff@aol.com.*

[MIDDLE PATUXENT ENVIRONMENTAL AREA](#)

September 9, Sunday, 7:30 a.m. (half day) *Meet at the Clegg Meadow off Southwind Cir, Columbia, MD 21044.* Moderate walking through wooded trails and along the river. Great area for migrants of all species. Field edges and thickets provide sparrow

Anyone is welcome to contribute articles or ideas which you think will be of interest to other birders. Copy may be sent to:
Amanda Witt
8865 Purple Iris Lane
Elkridge, MD 21075
amanda.witt@yahoo.com

The Goldfinch, newsletter of the Howard County Bird Club, is published five times per year. Copy deadline for the November/December 2012 issue is September 25, 2012.

Amanda Witt, *Editor*
Joanne Solem, *Proofreader*

habitat. If time and birds warrant, we will also do the Trotter Rd. Loop. Prepare for wet grass and mud on the trails. No facilities. *Leader – Joe Hanfman, auk1844@gmail.com or 410-772-8424.*

FALL COUNT

September 15, Saturday See [page 10](#) for more details.

[HENRYTON ROAD, PATAPSCO VALLEY STATE PARK](#)

September 19, Wednesday, 8:00 a.m. (half day) *Meet at bottom of Henryton Rd at the dead end.* Walk along the Patapsco River looking for fall migrants. Mature woodlands provide excellent habitat for migrant thrushes. This is prime migration time and many species of forest birds expected. Plan for moderate walking and possible muddy trails areas. No facilities. *Leader – Joe Byrnes 410-730-5329, LBRoller@verizon.net.*

HAWK WATCH AT [MEADOWBROOK PARK](#)

September 22, Saturday, 9:30 a.m. (half day) *Meet at hawk watch site on hilltop.* Bring a chair and sustenance for however long you plan to stay. Harry will provide tips on separating species in flight. The park provides paved path for walking. Ponds and great sparrow habitat should provide other birding opportunities. Sun protection is recommended. Facilities available. Cancelled in inclement weather. *Leader – Harry Fink, harry@mdphelp.com or 410-446-4747.*

[WESTERN REGIONAL PARK](#)


September 23, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. (half day) *Meet at Carr's Mill Road lot.* Moderate walking along field edges and woodland trails. Opportunity for warblers, sparrows, thrushes and flyovers. Small pond may host shorebirds. Facilities available. *Leader - Bonnie Ott, bonnieott@verizon.net, 443-285-3302.*

FUNGI SEARCH


September 30, Sunday, afternoon.
Explore local parkland for a variety of fall fungi. Site to be determined. May be cancelled if weather has been exceedingly dry. *Contact Bob & Jo Solem at odenata@msn.com for details.*

(Field Trips continued from page 2)

THE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES OPEN HOUSE & BIRD WALKS October 6, Saturday, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Bird walks at 10:15, 11:30, & 12:45. 4240 Folly Quarter Road, Ellicott City. Come to the Open House at the farm and learn how the Academic, Research, and Extension programs benefit you. See the horses, cows, calves, and turtles; watch the insect races and beautiful butterflies; take a hay wagon farm tour; visit the educational and interactive displays and exhibits on everything from nutrition to rural enterprise development; participate in the numerous hands-on activities; make a purchase from local farmers' market vendors; talk with a University of Maryland, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources representative; and get your plant questions answered by a Master Gardener. Members of the Howard County Bird Club will be present for field trips around the farm, throughout the day. <http://www.agnropenhouse.umd.edu/> Leaders - Bonnie Ott, bonnieott@verizon.net, 443-285-3302, David Cummings, Russ Ruffing, Jo Solem, & Wes Earp.

 **MT. PLEASANT FARM - HOWARD COUNTY CONSERVANCY** October 7, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hours) Meet at parking lot. Easy walking through the fields of Mt. Pleasant Farm. Tree lines, hedgerows and streams provide opportunity for non-meadow species. Prime time for sparrows. Great opportunity for flyovers. Facilities available. Leader - Scott Berglund, 410-750-2568, Business250@yahoo.com.

 **ELKHORN GARDEN PLOTS** October 8, Monday 8:30 a.m. (2 hours) The plots are on the east side of Oakland Mills Road opposite Dasher Ct. The garden plots offer excellent opportunities for unusual sparrows, migrant passerines, and interesting late season butterflies. No facilities. Leader – Jim Wilkinson, 410-381-9250.

 **LAKE ELKHORN** October 13, Saturday, 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hours) Meet at Dockside Parking lot. Easy walking along the lake and to Forebay Pond. Migrants will be moving through. Warblers are generally in abundance. The lake can turn up interesting surprises. Hawks are also possible flying over. No facilities. Leader – Allen Lewis, allenlewis@gmail.com.

SPARROW BIG DAY

October 14, Sunday (all day) Limit: 12 people
Search the wetlands and dry fields in this intensive search for as many sparrows as possible. Going for 12 species! Previous years have turned up non-sparrow rarities! Expect difficult walking for most of the day. Knee boots a must. Facilities at some spots.


Contact Bonnie Ott, bonnieott@verizon.net, 443-285-3302 to sign up and get info.

WEST FRIENDSHIP PARK

October 21, Sunday, 8:00 a.m., (half day) Meet at shopping center just west of Rt. 32 and Rt. 144. Will carpool to nearby park. Moderate walking along field edges and through stream valleys. Small ponds may have some surprises. Expect wet areas. Rustic facilities. Leaders - Jeff Culler, cullersfuls@hotmail.com, 410-465-9006 and Joe Byrnes 410-730-5329, LBRoller@verizon.net.

CENTENNIAL PARK

November 4, Sunday, 8:00 a.m., (2-3 hours) (Note: daylight saving time ends) Meet at west end parking lot off Centennial Lane. Easy walking on paved path around Centennial Lake. Woodlands, fields, and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Early waterfowl, lingering migrants likely. Facilities available. Leader - Mike Kerwin, m63kerwin@verizon.net, 410-461-2408.

 = Great for beginning birders

2013 MOS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM – PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENT

BY [TOM STRIKWERDA](#)

The Maryland Ornithological Society announces its summer 2013 scholarship program, open to Maryland teachers, nature center staff, park rangers, and youth leaders, to attend week-long ecology and ornithology workshops. In 2012 six scholarship recipients attended workshops at the beautiful [Hog Island Audubon](#) camp in Maine. Awards, each valued at approximately \$1100, cover tuition, room, and board for an intensive six days of field study and instruction in ecology, ornithology, conservation, or natural history. Travel expenses to and from the workshops are the responsibility of the recipient. Although the 2013 workshop selections and dates haven't yet been announced, they're expected to be similar to 2012. The application and workshop information for 2012 can serve as a guide for preliminary planning for the 2013 program and is available on the MOS website (www.mdbirds.org). Official information for 2013 will be posted on the website when available and announced in the next issue of the *Yellowthroat*. If you have any questions, please contact Scholarship Chair Tom Strikwerda at tom.strikwerda@verizon.net.

SPRING BIRD RECORDS: MARCH 1 – MAY 31, 2012

BY [JOANNE SOLEM](#)

A mild winter followed by the warmest March on record produced more than a dozen early sightings. Species of note included [Red-throated Loon](#), [Sandhill Crane](#), [Dunlin](#), [Wilson's Phalarope](#), [Orange-crowned Warbler](#), and [Summer Tanager](#). Add a pair of [Yellow-crowned Night-Herons](#) nest building for a new nest record, four [Common Raven](#) nestlings, and a state early egg date for [Pileated Woodpecker](#) and it was a season to remember.

The **Snow Goose** (wh.) at Bushy Park Rd/Daisy Rd was last seen 3/3 (**KS**). Four free-flying **Mute Swans** visited Waverly Pond 5/31 (**KDy**; **HFk+**). Four late **American Black Ducks** stopped at Centennial 5/10 (**JCu**). A **Blue-winged Teal** was spotted at Triadelphia Reservoir (TRIRS) 4/3 (**JHf**), five were counted later that day (**DCm**, **NM**). A pair of **Northern Shovelers** appeared at Font Hill Wetland Park 3/8 (**HPt**) and stayed until 3/16 (**MKw**); four visited Race Road Wetland 4/12 (**MO'S**). The only **Northern Pintails** were one at the University of Maryland Central Farm (UMDCF) 3/3 (**BO+**) and two at W. Friendship 3/17 (**HFk**). The county's first **Green-winged Teal (Eurasian)** was picked out of a flock of Green-wings at UMDCF 4/6 (**NM**, **JHf+**, **RRf** ph.). It remained until 4/15 (**NM**, **BO+**). A female **Hooded Merganser** with a brood of large young at Waterford, Jennings Chapel Rd 4/3 was an early nester (**MW**), while a female was still at Fulton Pond at the end of the period (**MW**). A late **Red-breasted Merganser** was at Centennial 5/12 (**MLm**).

A dozen **Wild Turkey** sightings were headed by 13 at UMDCF 3/3 (**DCm**, **BO+**), while one photographed near the corner of US 29/MD108 (First Presbyterian Church) on 3/22 was in the most unexpected location (**JEb**). A lone **Ring-necked Pheasant** (away from known releases) was seen at Shaffers Mill Rd in April (**MBr**). **Red-throated Loons** are choice visitors. One at TRIRS 4/1 (**DCm**), 13th record, set a new early date [4/5/82 **MW**]. **Pied-billed Grebe** numbers at Lake Elkhorn reached nine on 3/10 (**KS**). A **Horned Grebe** count of 26 at TRIRS 3/31 was nice (**NM**, **HFk**).

An **American Bittern** at Old Frederick Rd/Jay Dr 3/25 tied the second earliest date (**PWf**); another was at UMDCF 5/2 (**BO**, **JHf+**). **Great Blue Herons** at Vantage Point did well with at least 21 of the 29 nests occupied on 3/14 (**NM**), while 28 adults were counted on or near nests on 3/28 as seen from Vantage House (**W&SE**). Of the 10 heron nests at Waterford, eight were occupied on 3/24 (**WE+**). A **Great Egret** at Lake Elkhorn 3/4 was the sec-

ond earliest ever (**JHf**). A **Black-crowned Night-Heron** at Warfield's Pond Pk 3/21 (**BKd**) was a new early date [3/22/08 **JHf**]. One at Jackson Pond 5/2 was at an infrequently reported location (**SN**).

New nesting records are always exciting news. Two adult **Yellow-crowned Night-Herons** were found at a partially built nest at Sharp Antler, close to Lake Elkhorn on 5/18 (**JS**). For photos and story, visit http://www.howardbirds.org/photo_page/member_photos/Yellow-crownedNight-HeronLakeElkhorn.htm. Unfortunately, the nest was not completed — an occasional circumstance with this species.

Of the known **Bald Eagle** nests in the county, the only one which could be verified as successful was that on TRIRS; on 5/1 it contained at least one nestling (**HMz**, ph.). Spring hawk flights are more unusual than those in autumn so 37 **Sharp-shinned Hawks** over Centennial 4/14 was a treat (**MKw**). **Broad-winged Hawks** came early with reports beginning 4/8 at Centennial (**MKw**) and 4/10 at both Wilde Lake (**JHf**, **RRf-2**) and Lake Kittamaquidi (**DCm-1**); 285 over Centennial on 4/15 was an excellent spring count (**MKw**). **Merlins** were reported at three locations the first week of March (**JMa**; **BO**; **NM**) with a fourth at UMDCF 4/30 (**RRf**). The lone **Peregrine Falcon** was spotted at Centennial 3/6 (**JSz**). **Virginia Rails** were present at UMDCF from 4/16 (**BO**, **JHf+**), a new early date, to 5/11 (**BO**, **JCu+**); three **Soras** was the high there on 5/2 (**BO**, **JHf+**).

The two (one ad.) **Sandhill Cranes** continued from February at Murray Hill Rd/Gorman Rd. Not seen since 2/28, they reappeared 3/5. They were twice observed flying south or southeast near sunset (**TFe**, **GKg**), so an effort was made on 3/12 and 3/13 to determine where they spent the night (**JSh+**). Inquiries at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center (**POs**) verified that two Sandhills (one ad.) first showed up on 1/3 and sometimes spent the night near the crane pens (**JCh**), approximately 9.5 miles from their Howard County feeding area. They were last seen in the field 3/13 (**WE+**) and at Patuxent on 3/14 (**JCh**). It was later learned that the favored field contained unharvested corn (due to excess rain last fall) which probably attracted the birds (**WE**).

A **Solitary Sandpiper** at Fox Chase 4/1 (**JCu**) set a new record [4/3/89 **MCh**]; the last was at the landfill 5/26 (**KHf**). Two **Dunlin** (different plumages), the first since 2009, created a stir:

(Records continued on page 5)

(Records continued from page 4)

5/5 Waverly Pd (**RRf**) and 5/11 UMDCF (**BO+**) to 5/12 (**M&GmC, RSm, CRo**). **American Woodcock** have had an unusual year: they were courting in January; five or six were present at River Rd, Sykesville 3/1 (**FLv**); and three were still in courtship flight at Annapolis Rock 5/12 (**JSh, MSz**). A handsome female **Wilson's Phalarope**, fifth record, spent 5/8 at Fulton Pd (**JGn**).

Bonaparte's Gull numbers are unpredictable, but sometimes good-sized flocks move through in spring. On 4/13, a flock of at least 325, a record high, flew low over the dam at Centennial heading west (**JCr, ph.**). Western Regional Pk produced a startling 200 **Ring-billed Gulls** 3/1 (**BHi**). The **Caspian Tern** high was 23 at Lake Kittamaquidi 4/11 (**KDy**). On May Count, 5/12, two **Black-billed Cuckoos** were sighted: Elkhorn Garden Plot (**ALw-1**) and west of Murray Hill Rd, so. of the Middle Patuxent River (**JMcK-1**). **Eastern Screech-Owls** were reported by **WE, JHf, RRf, ESu, and KTF**, with a nest off Harmel Dr (**TRy**). The Hipsley Mill/Annapolis Rock area produced eight **Great Horned Owls** on 5/12 (**JSh, MSz**). **Barred Owl** young were reported at Elkhorn 5/14 (**MSt-2**) and Duvall 5/31 (**KTF-2**). The most unusual **Chimney Swift** report was of 200 swirling over Glenelg H.S. 5/8 (**LCg**). A **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** north of US40/Rogers Ave on 3/23 (*fide* **BO**) was the second earliest ever.

Red-headed Woodpeckers were reported from four locations: Schooley Mill Pk 5/1 (**BO**); St. Michaels Rd 5/12 (**W&SE-2**); Alpha Ridge Pk 5/19 (**BO+**), and Hunterbrook 5/20 (**DBr**). A **Pileated Woodpecker** was observed dropping an eggshell at the Robinson Nature Center 3/28 (**JMa, EBm**). The pieces were found and photographed; the date established a new state early egg date (**RR**). A Pileated nest at the Center (**JS**) was well photographed (**JMa; HFk**) and fledged four young over a period of 51 hours (**JMa**). See http://www.howardbirds.org/photo_page/member_photos/PileatedWoodpecker-RNC.htm for more details.

The only spring **Olive-sided Flycatcher** was spotted 5/12 at Annapolis Rock parking lot (**GKg, TFe**). An **Alder Flycatcher** at Mt. Pleasant reported 5/31 (**BO**) stayed into June; it had probably been present since 5/18 (**RRf**). **Least Flycatchers** were widespread: Daniels 4/30 (**BO**), Schooley 5/1 (**BO**), MPEA 5/1 (**JS, HPt**), So. Trotter Rd 5/10 (**WE**), and MPEA 5/15 (**JHf**).

A **White-eyed Vireo** at MPEA 4/7 (**MRg**) set a new early record [4/11/06 **GAs**]. The Orange Grove section of Patapsco Valley St. Pk produced 30 **Red-eyed Vireos** 5/12 (**RRf, HFk, MRg**). All five regular vireo migrants were noted at MPEA 4/28 (**RRf, MRg**). The **Common Raven** nest on the Howard side of Duckett (Rocky Gorge) Dam held four nestlings on 4/11 (**JSh, MSz, JS,**

KKx). The two adults attending them seemed unphased by the beginning of dam-extension construction; it remains to be seen how they will react next spring. Three swallow species set second earliest dates: a **Tree** at Centennial 3/4 (**JCu+**), a **Rough-winged** at Centennial 3/13 (**KS**), and a **Barn** at Brighton Dam 3/22 (**DCm**). A **Cliff** at Centennial 3/31 was a new early date (**RRf**) [4/2/90 **CBk**; 4/2/01 **RCu**]. **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were scarce with one at Mt. Pleasant 3/12 (**HPt**) and a report of two at Schooley 4/7 (**ESt**). A **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** at Daniels 3/21 (**NM**) was a new early date [3/28/03 **HZ**]; the second report, from MPEA 3/22 (**JHf**), verified the early trend.

Two **Gray-cheeked Thrushes** were reported in the woods north of the dam at Centennial 5/12 (**MLm**). **Swainson's Thrushes** peaked at MPEA with six both 5/3 (**JHf, DCm, ALw**) and 5/6 (**KS**). A **Brown Thrasher** at MPEA noted on 3/2 (**BO**) and 3/24 (**MKw**) may have been the wintering bird; a pair nested near a home at Timberleigh in late May (**DNg**). **Cedar Waxwings** were generally scarce until early May when large numbers moved into the county. The May Count total of 1,537 was more than 500 above that of any previous spring count (**KHf**).

Warbler migration produced mostly expected species, with some moving through in better numbers than in most recent years. The lone **Prothonotary Warbler** was at Pigtail 5/5 (**JS, EH**). Two **Orange-crowneds** were observed. One was at the Florence Rd silage pit 3/5 (**D&MHv, CSt**); it lingered to 3/25 (**LSt**) allowing many birders the opportunity to see it. Interestingly, a photo taken 3/1 (and initially considered a different species), proved to be the same bird which may have been seen as early as mid-February (**HFk**). Whatever the date, it is the county's earliest record. A second, rather late Orange-crowned, was reported from a field edge at Hipsley Mill Rd 5/12 (**JSh, MSz**). A **Mourning Warbler** photographed at Cavey La 5/5 was the second earliest (**RRf, HFk**); another was at MPEA 5/11 (**MRg**). **Cape Mays** were reported from 5/1 at Brush Run, E. Col. (**JW**) to 5/18 Cavey La (**RRf-2**), with a high of three at Dunloggin 5/5 (**KS**). Although **Ceruleans** were few or nonexistent at their usual haunts at Hipsley Mill and along Cabin Branch (**DCm; JSh+**), they were reported from Western Regional Pk 5/3 (**BO**), Marriottsville 5/4 (**ALw**), and on 5/12 both at the Chaconas property (**WE**) and at Mullinix Mill Rd (**J&MBr**). A **Magnolia** set a new early date of 4/18 at David Force WMA (**BO, ROr**) [4/21/89 **KMr**]; a **Bay-breasted** tied the 5/1 early date (**RRf**) [5/1/93 **SAt**]; while a **Palm** on 3/23 at Marriottsville eked out a new early date (**RRf**) [3/24/90 **SAt**]. **Yellow-throateds** returned to favored sites along the Patapsco (**m. obs.**); they were also spotted at Centennial 4/8 (**MKw**),

(Records continued on page 6)

(Records continued from page 5)

Robinson Nature Center 4/3+ (**HFk**), Big Branch 4/11 (**DCm**), and Allview where one visited a feeder 4/10 (**JMcK**). Perhaps the same bird was the one singing on territory along the river there 5/12 (**ALw**). A **Prairie** at Centennial 4/10 (**BKd**) broke one of the oldest records [4/15/54 **RMu**, 4/15/01 **DOI**]. The **Canada** at MPEA 5/1 was the second earliest (**JS**, **HPt**). Several birders were pleased to catch good waves of migrants including Woodstock 4/30 (**RRf**, **HFk**), MPEA 5/3 (**JHf**, **DCm**, **ALw**), and Rockburn 5/12 (**BO**, **EH**).

Spring sparrow variety and numbers normally do not approach what autumn brings. **Vespers** were located at W. Friendship 4/4 (**JCu**), Alpha Ridge Landfill 4/7 (**RCu**, **HFk**+2), and Fox Chase 4/21- 4/22 (**JHf**). Both **Savannah** (60) and **Swamp** (60) numbers peaked at UMDCF 4/5 (**BO**+). **Lincoln's** were reported from Schooley, Western, and Mt. Pleasant (all **BO**), all the first week of May. The last three **Dark-eyed Juncos** were tallied at Talbots Landing 4/13 (**R&JGr**), Stone Hill Dr 4/14 (**KLz**) and River Rd, Sykesville 4/15 (**FLv**).

A **Summer Tanager** was noted at MPEA 5/19 (**JHb**). John graciously stayed at the location so at least a few Big Day participants were able to find this relatively uncooperative bird. It was still present 5/20 (**TFe**). A **Scarlet Tanager** at MPEA 4/14 (**KS**) beat a long-standing record [4/17/70 **RMu**].

Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were widespread at feeders, mostly the last week of April and first week of May. Both a Rose-breasted and a **Blue Grosbeak** visited feeders at Mt. Albert (**M&GMcC**). Twelve **Eastern Meadowlarks** were at the landfill 3/3, a nice count (**RCu**, **BO**+), while one near the Trotter Rd entrance of MPEA 3/23 was unusual (**SBg**). **Rusty Blackbirds** were reported mostly the first half of March in the wetlands at Florence Rd/Shaffersville Rd (**m. obs.**), with others from W. Friendship 3/8 (**BO**-10), Gwynn Acres 3/9 (**BO**, **ROr**-3), and Fox Chase 4/1 (**HFk**, **RRf**-8). At Fox Chase on 4/19, the last Rusty was counted as was the first **Orchard Oriole**, tying the second earliest date (**JCu**).

Winter invasives made a poor showing with no **Purple Finch** sightings; a single **Pine Siskin** at Brush Run, E. Col. 4/3 was a pleasant surprise (**JW**).

[previous record]

m. obs. – many observers

Observers: **SAt** – Scott Atkinson, **GAs** - Glenn Austin, **CBk** – Connie Bockstie, **SBg** – Scott Berglund, **JBr** – Jim Brinkley,

MBr – Marilyn Brinkley, **DBr** – Doug Bruns, **EBm** – Eric Buschman, **JCh** – Jane Chandler, **MCh** – Martha Chestem, **LCg** – Lisa Colangelo, **JCr** – Jon Corcoran, **JCu** – Jeff Culler, **RCu** – Ralph Cullison III, **DCm** – David Cummings, **KDy** – Karen Darcy, **SE** – Sue Earp, **WE** – Wes Earp, **JEb** - Jane Ebert, **TFe** – Tom Feild, **HFk** – Harry Fink, **JGr** – Jane Geuder, **RGr** – Ralph Geuder, **JGn**– Jim Green, **JHf** – Joe Hanfman, **DHv** – Dave Harvey, **MHv** – Maureen Harvey, **KHf** – Kevin Heffernan, **BHi** – Bill Hill, **EH** – Emy Holdridge, **JHb** – John Hubbell, **Mkw** – Mike Kerwin, **BKd** – Bill Kidwell, **GKg** – Geraldine King, **KKx** – Kim Knox, **MLm** – Mike Leumas, **ALw** – Allen Lewis, **KLz** – Kathy Litzinger, **FLv** – Felicia Lovelett, **NM** – Nancy Magnusson, **JMa** – John Maloney, **KMr** – Kathy Mariano, **GMcC** – Grazina McClure, **MMcC** – Mike McClure, **JMcK** – John McKitterick, **HMz** – Helen Metzman, **RMu** – Rosamond Munro, **DNg** – Diane Nagengast, **SN** – Sue Neri, **DOI**- Daryl Olson, **ROr** – Richard Orr, **POs** – Peter Osenton, **MO'S** – Michael O'Sullivan, **BO** – Bonnie Ott, **HPt** – Howard Patterson, **TRy** – Tim Ray, **RR** – Robert Ringler, **CRb** – Clyde Robinette, **MRg** – Matt Rogosky, **RRf** – Russ Ruffing, **KS** – Kurt Schwarz, **JSh** – Jay Sheppard, **RSm** – Romaine Smith, **JS** – Jo Solem, **LSr** – Leslie Starr, **JSz** – Jim Stasz, **ES** – Ed Stedman, **MSt** - Michelle Stewart, **CS** – Chuck Stirrat, **MSz** – Marcy Stutzman, **ESu** – Eva Sunell, **KTf** – Kate Tufts, **MW** – Mark Wallace, **JW** – Jim Wilkinson, **PWf** – Paul Woodford, **HZ** – Helen Zeichner.

SEED SALE ANNOUNCEMENT

BY [WARD EBERT](#)

Kevin Cassidy, the owner of The Wildlife Authority, has agreed to again host our seed sale. The sale will be held on Saturday, October 6th. Around the second week of September an order form will sent by mail, by email, and will be posted on the Howard County Bird Club website. Seed can be picked up from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Wildlife Authority, 3275 Bethany Lane, Suite B, Ellicott City, MD 21042. You can visit their website, www.wildlifeauthority.com, for a map and more information.

As in the past, our net proceeds from the seed sale will be contributed to conservation causes. Over the years, the Howard County Bird Club has contributed nearly \$67,000 to various conservation organizations. The vast majority of these funds have come from the seed sales. So please stock up on seed and help the birds.

We thank all of you who have supported the sale over the past years. We hope that you will support this year's sale as well. See you on Saturday, October 6th!

COLORFUL BIRDS ATTAIN HONORS

BY [KATE TUFTS](#)

Two Howard County students chose the most colorful of area birds to win first place awards in this year's Student Art Contest. Patapasco Middle School student, Kruti Patel, drew a lovely American Goldfinch perched atop a zinnia while Tiffany Lee of Manor Woods Elementary School chose a Northern Cardinal as her subject. Both girls received a backpack containing field guides and Eagle Optic binoculars. The awards were donated by the Maryland Ornithological Society. Nine schools were represented in the contest. Judging of the 27 entries was performed by Holly Highfill, noted area display and set designer. Ms. Highfill designed most of the displays at the Robinson Nature Center including the Chesapeake Bay exhibit and the four seasons tree.



American Goldfinch rendered by Patapasco Middle School student, Kruti Patel.



Northern Cardinal by Manor Woods Elementary School student Tiffany Lee.

HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB'S FIRST "GARAGE" SALE

BY [JIM LUBITZ](#)

The Howard County Bird Club will hold its first garage sale before the November 8, 2012 meeting. It will be held from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Robinson Nature Center. The regular monthly meeting will follow the garage sale. Here's a chance to pick up used equipment from fellow members and to get cash for extra stuff that has been sitting in your closets for years. Get an extra set of binoculars to keep in your car; a tripod for your camera, a camera or binoculars for a young person.

Here's how it works:

- Bring in used birding *equipment* that you would like to sell or trade. You set the price and you can negotiate with potential buyers. Equipment means optics, tripods, I-Pods, laser pointers, outdoor clothing (outerwear only—parkas, rubber boots, etc), outdoor equipment (e.g. walking sticks, collapsible stools), etc.
- Please do **NOT** bring books, CDs, bird paintings, coffee mugs, key chains, T-shirts, ash trays, bird feeders, etc, etc. This garage sale is only for birding equipment for stuff you use outside.
- Equipment must be in clean, serviceable condition. No junk.

If you have any questions, please contact Jim Lubitz at 410-730-7958 or jimlub@gmail.com. Hope to see you there!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

Board meetings are held the fourth Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted, at the home of the board member listed. If directions are required, please call the hosting board member.

September 27, 2012

Wes Earp
6480 South Trotter Road
Clarksville, MD 21029
410-531-3197

October 25, 2012

Kurt Schwarz
9045 Dunloggin Court
Ellicott City, MD 21042
410-461-1643

HOWARD COUNTY MAY COUNT RESULTS

BY [KEVIN HEFFERNAN](#)

Seventy birders participated in the 65th annual May Count which was held on May 12, 2012. The day was clear with high temperatures in the mid 70's. The 141 total species continued the streak of overall low species counts (we had 139 in 2010 and 2011). The total number of birds (17,087) was slightly below average for the last 10 years. A total of 230 species have been seen over the 39 years that the bird club has run the count. Seventy-seven species have been seen every year while 22 species have been seen only once. Two species were seen for the first time this year, Dunlin and Orange-crowned Warbler.

Thirteen species established or tied all-time high counts: Wild Turkey, Red-shouldered Hawk, Dunlin, Red-headed and Pileated Woodpecker, Willow and Great Crested Flycatcher, Warbling Vireo, Common Raven, Fish Crow, Cedar Waxwing, Orange-crowned Warbler, and Indigo Bunting. If you thought that there were a lot of Cedar Waxwings during the count, you were right. The 1,537 Waxwings seen was significantly higher than the next highest count (1,015).

An additional seven species set or tied 10 year high counts: Great Blue Heron, American Woodcock, Great Horned Owl, Acadian Flycatcher, Tennessee and Cape May Warbler, and Northern Waterthrush.

Hooded Merganser was seen for only the second time (other sighting was in 1991), Lesser Scaup for the third time (last sighting in 1983), and Red-breasted Merganser for the fifth time (last sighting in 1995).

Common Raven was seen for the third time (all in the last five years) and Red-headed Woodpecker for the third year in a row. Wild Turkey was seen for the 13th time including seven of the last eight years. Great Egret has been seen nine years in a row. Yellow-throated Warbler was seen for the first time in the last seven years.

American Kestrel was missed for the first time ever. This was not a total surprise as only a single bird had been seen in each of the last four counts (although four kestrels were seen the following week during the Big Day). Sharp-shinned Hawk and Ring-billed Gull were missed for the first time in the last 10 years. Eastern Screech-Owl was missed for the second year in a row.

The following 12 species had 10 year low counts: Mallard, American Kestrel, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Yellow Warbler, Eastern Towhee, Northern Cardinal, Bobolink, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, House Finch, American Goldfinch, and House Sparrow. Some of the misses and low counts may have been due to the exceedingly warm spring that resulted in an early migration coupled with the late May 12th count date.

A compilation spreadsheet of the May Count data from 1974 to the present can be found on the Howard County Bird Club website.

Many thanks to our compiler, Chuck Stirrat. His tireless efforts and attention to detail make this task much easier than it would otherwise be. I also want to thank the Area Coordinators: Wes Earp, Tom Strikwerda, Chuck Stirrat, Mike McClure, Karen Darcy, Bonnie Ott, and Jo Solem. Finally, I want to give a special thanks to June Tveekrem for again volunteering to host the tally rally. Her hospitality is, as always, very much appreciated.

And to the following participants, a big thank you; without you, these counts cannot happen: Jim and Marilyn Brinkley, Lisa Colangelo, Dennis and Jane Coskren, Ralph Cullison, David Cummings, Karen Darcy (Area 5 Coordinator), Andrew Davis, Sue Earp, Wes Earp (Area 1 Coordinator), Tom Feild, Jack and Diane Ference, Harry Fink, Dave and Maureen Harvey, Kevin Heffernan (May Count Coordinator), Bill and Gayle Hill, Emy Holdridge, Ed Huestis, Geraldine King, David Lane, Shashi Lengade, Mike Leumas, Allen Lewis, Kathie Lillie, Felicia Lovelett, Rosa Lubitz, Brigitte Lund, Janet Lydon, Grazina McClure, Mike McClure (Area 4 Coordinator), Anne McEvoy, John McKitterick, Woody Merkle, Barry Miller, Tom Miller, Sue Muller, Sue Neri, Carol Newman, Peter Osenton, Bonnie Ott (Area 6 Coordinator), Ron and Susan Polniaszek, Jan Randle, Emily Reed, Clyde Robinette, Matt Rogosky, Russ Ruffing, Kurt Schwarz, Jay Sheppard, Romaine Smith, Jo Solem (Area 7 Coordinator), Lori Speelman, Michelle Stewart, Chuck Stirrat (Area 3 Coordinator, Count Compiler), Tom Strikwerda (Area 2 Coordinator), Marcie Stutzman, Tim Thompson, Robin Todd, Sherry Tomlinson, Kate Tufts, Ginny Walker, Mark Wallace, Jim Wilkinson, Michele Wright, Helen Zeichner, and Paul Zucker.

Test Your Knowledge Answer: Canada Goose, Cedar Waxwing, European Starling, Gray Catbird, American Robin, Northern Cardinal, and Red-winged Blackbird.

HOWARD COUNTY MAY COUNT RESULTS - MAY 12, 2012							
Canada Goose	900	Chimney Swift	134	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	213	Palm Warbler	2
Wood Duck	29	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	23	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1	Pine Warbler	7
Mallard	126	Belted Kingfisher	33	Eastern Bluebird	221	Yel.-rump'd (Myrtle) Warbler	94
Lesser Scaup	1	Red-headed Woodpecker	2	Veery	28	Yellow-throated Warbler	1
Hooded Merganser	1	Red-bellied Woodpecker	336	Gray-cheeked Thrush	2	Prairie Warbler	27
Red-breasted Merganser	1	Downy Woodpecker	91	Swainson's Thrush	37	Blk.-thrt'd. Green Warbler	31
Wild Turkey	18	Hairy Woodpecker	30	Wood Thrush	263	Canada Warbler	23
Common Loon	3	Northern (Yellow-sh'd) Flicker	56	American Robin	611	Wilson's Warbler	4
Double-crested Cormorant	28	Pileated Woodpecker	54	Gray Catbird	576	Yellow-breasted Chat	29
Great Blue Heron	68	Olive-sided Flycatcher	1	Northern Mockingbird	191	Eastern Towhee	158
Great Egret	5	Eastern Wood-Pewee	166	Brown Thrasher	25	Chipping Sparrow	236
Green Heron	31	Acadian Flycatcher	201	European Starling	829	Field Sparrow	99
Black Vulture	115	Willow Flycatcher	14	Cedar Waxwing	1,537	Savannah Sparrow	42
Turkey Vulture	204	Eastern Phoebe	77	Ovenbird	205	Grasshopper Sparrow	17
Osprey	11	Great Crested Flycatcher	125	Worm-eating Warbler	14	Song Sparrow	189
Bald Eagle	3	Eastern Kingbird	130	Louisiana Waterthrush	39	Swamp Sparrow	8
Northern Harrier	1	White-eyed Vireo	62	Northern Waterthrush	26	White-throated Sparrow	25
Cooper's Hawk	7	Yellow-throated Vireo	29	Blue-winged Warbler	12	White-crowned Sparrow	1
Red-shouldered Hawk	75	Warbling Vireo	49	Black-&-white Warbler	16	Dark-eyed Junco	1
Broad-winged Hawk	8	Red-eyed Vireo	457	Tennessee Warbler	4	Scarlet Tanager	162
Red-tailed Hawk	46	Blue Jay	324	Orange-crowned Warbler	1	Northern Cardinal	657
Killdeer	37	American Crow	378	Nashville Warbler	1	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	8
Spotted Sandpiper	26	Fish Crow	94	Kentucky Warbler	10	Blue Grosbeak	6
Solitary Sandpiper	95	<i>crow species</i>	151	Common Yellowthroat	294	Indigo Bunting	331
Greater Yellowlegs	4	Common Raven	1	Hooded Warbler	8	Bobolink	32
Lesser Yellowlegs	18	Horned Lark	19	American Redstart	129	Red-winged Blackbird	567
Least Sandpiper	26	Purple Martin	52	Cape May Warbler	5	Eastern Meadowlark	9
Dunlin	1	Tree Swallow	147	Cerulean Warbler	2	Common Grackle	254
Wilson's Snipe	2	N. Rough-winged Swallow	37	Northern Parula	175	Brown-headed Cowbird	192
American Woodcock	3	Cliff Swallow	67	Magnolia Warbler	30	Orchard Oriole	65
Rock Pigeon	75	Barn Swallow	387	Bay-breasted Warbler	1	Baltimore Oriole	209
Mourning Dove	316	Carolina Chickadee	246	Blackburnian Warbler	5	House Finch	116
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	5	Tufted Titmouse	321	Yellow Warbler	81	American Goldfinch	284
Black-billed Cuckoo	2	White-breasted Nuthatch	83	Chestnut-sided Warbler	40	House Sparrow	189
Great Horned Owl	8	Carolina Wren	351	Blackpoll Warbler	135	Total Birds	17,088
Barred Owl	13	House Wren	86	Blk.-thrt'd. Blue Warbler	120	Total Species	141



HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

10970 Millbank Row
Columbia, MD 21044

September/October 2012 - Inside This Issue

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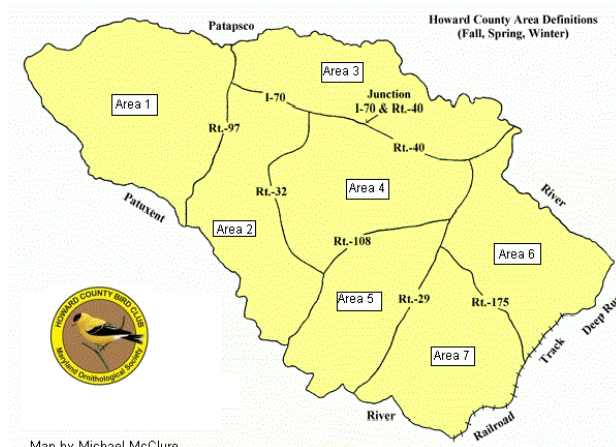
NINETEENTH ANNUAL FALL COUNT

BY [MIKE MCCLURE](#)

The Howard County Bird Club's annual Fall Count, scheduled each year on the third Saturday of September, will be on September 15th. Mike McClure (410-531-2780) and Chuck Stirrat (410-531-2417) are the county co-coordinators. Prior years have set an average of 124 species of birds identified on the count. Spend the day birding with us and help raise the average! Birders of all skill levels are encouraged to participate. Ask to be put with an experienced individual if you do not wish to have your own territory. The county is divided into seven areas (shown below) which are used for all annual counts. A fall season field sheet for Howard County is available on the Club's website. Species that require a writeup include those identified with a double asterisk (**), as well as any writeins. Others that may require a writeup or oral amplification (*), as well as those that are early or late dates (@), are indicated.

The following area coordinators have been named: Area 1) Mark Wallace 301-725-6370 and Wes Earp 410-531-3197; Area 2) Jeff Culler 410-465-9006; Area 3) Karen Darcy & Kevin Hefferman 410-418-8731; Area 4) Mike McClure 410-531-2780; Area

5) Kurt Schwarz 410-461-1643; Area 6) Bonnie Ott 443-285-3302; and Area 7) Eva Sunell 443-319-5866. You may call an area or county coordinator to volunteer, or check at the September meeting. **Martha and Don Waugh** will host the tally rally at 9522 Angelina Circle, Columbia, MD. The potluck dinner will be served at approximately 7:00 p.m. RSVP with food category at fletcherw@msn.com or 410-381-8841 by Sept. 14th, to reserve space and if necessary to obtain directions.



Map by Michael McClure